

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 22, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 2261**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Gorell**

February 21, 2014

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An act to add Section 81 to the Military and Veterans Code, relating to veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2261, as amended, Gorell. *California Veterans Services and Workforce Division: veterans' benefits: Development Division.*

Existing law establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs, which administers *Affairs to administer* various benefits for veterans.

This bill would ~~create a~~ *establish the California Veterans Services and Workforce Development Division within the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a Transitional Assistance Program and to oversee the Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program. This bill would require specified staff to be transferred from various departments and agencies to the Veterans Services and Workforce Division. This bill would require a head of a state agency or department to report to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs when a new program is established that may assist veterans: department to administer veterans assistance programs provided by the state, and to coordinate with other state entities regarding informing veterans of benefits and assistance programs and changes in existing veterans programs or new veterans programs. This bill would on or before July 1, 2015, require the division to administer the programs and services described in the federal Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program, as specified. This bill would require the division to coordinate with the*

*Employment Development Department (EDD) for the transfer of the existing administration of these programs and services from the EDD to the division, including, but not limited to, coordinating the transfer of state civil service employees, records, and appropriated funds related to the administration of these programs. This bill would require the department to utilize its existing resources to pay any costs incurred by the department in implementing the transfer. This bill would also make legislative findings and declarations relating to the need for, and provision of, services for veterans.*

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares the following:
- 2 (a) California has the largest veteran population in the nation,
- 3 comprised of an estimated 2 million veterans.
- 4 (b) Each month, thousands of military personnel are released
- 5 from active service and face tremendous challenges transitioning
- 6 back into civilian life.
- 7 (c) The challenges veterans face are compounded by a system,
- 8 intended to help them, that is generally recognized as being difficult
- 9 and complex to navigate.
- 10 (d) Increasing disability benefit participation to the national
- 11 average could lead to a distribution of an additional \$330,000,000
- 12 in annual payments to California veterans.
- 13 (e) *The Bureau of Labor Statistics has indicated that*
- 14 *California's unemployment rate for veterans is 7.9 percent, with*
- 15 *Post-9/11 veterans' unemployment rate at 10.6 percent.*
- 16 (f) *According to the 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report*
- 17 *to Congress, California has an estimated 15,179 homeless veterans*
- 18 *– three times more than the next highest state of Florida.*
- 19 (g) *Other states have addressed their deficiencies towards*
- 20 *veterans service by consolidating or combining the efforts of state*
- 21 *agencies and departments that provide services for their veterans.*
- 22 (h) *The Department of Veterans Affairs established a veterans*
- 23 *services division as a resource for veterans to obtain benefits and*
- 24 *information on services.*
- 25 (i) *The California State Auditor, the Little Hoover Commission,*
- 26 *the California Research Bureau, the Legislative Analyst, and*

1 *several legislative hearings of the Senate Committee on Veterans*  
2 *Affairs, the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs, and the*  
3 *Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the*  
4 *Economy have indicated that the current delivery system for*  
5 *veterans services is failing California's veterans.*

6 SEC. 2. Section 81 is added to the Military and Veterans Code,  
7 to read:

8 81. (a) ~~A~~ *The California Veterans Services and Workforce*  
9 *Development Division shall be is hereby established in the*  
10 *department. department for the purpose of coordinating and*  
11 *administering veterans assistance programs provided by the state.*  
12 *The secretary shall have authority over the division.*

13 ~~(b) The Veterans Services and Workforce Division shall develop~~  
14 ~~a Transitional Assistance Program and oversee the following~~  
15 ~~programs:~~

16 ~~(1) The Local Veterans Employment Representatives.~~

17 ~~(2) Disabled Veterans Outreach Program.~~

18 ~~(c) Staff with specified knowledge and information from the~~  
19 ~~following departments and agencies shall be transferred to the~~  
20 ~~Veterans Service and Workforce Division to facilitate a one-stop~~  
21 ~~shop for veterans by utilizing other workforce investment~~  
22 ~~programs:~~

23 ~~(1) Employment Training Panel.~~

24 ~~(2) Labor and Workforce Development Agency.~~

25 ~~(3) California Workforce Investment Board.~~

26 ~~(4) State Department of Mental Health.~~

27 ~~(5) Department of General Services.~~

28 ~~(6) State Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs.~~

29 ~~(7) California State University.~~

30 ~~(8) University of California.~~

31 ~~(9) California Community Colleges.~~

32 ~~(10) Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.~~

33 ~~(d) The secretary shall have authority over the Veterans Services~~  
34 ~~and Workforce Division.~~

35 ~~(e) A head of a state agency or department shall report to the~~  
36 ~~secretary when a new program is established that may assist~~  
37 ~~veterans.~~

38 *(b) The division shall do all of the following:*

39 *(1) Coordinate with state entities that provide a benefit or*  
40 *assistance to veterans to ensure both of the following:*

1 (A) State entities provide information to veterans regarding all  
2 other assistance programs and benefits provided by the state.

3 (B) State entities are aware of changes in existing veterans  
4 programs or the establishment of new veterans programs provided  
5 by the state.

6 (2) Collaborate with the California Interagency Council on  
7 Veterans to implement further strategic changes to the delivery of  
8 veterans services.

9 (c) (1) Beginning on or before July 1, 2015, the division shall  
10 administer the programs and services described in the federal Jobs  
11 for Veterans State Grant Program, including, but not limited to,  
12 overseeing the federal Local Veterans' Employment  
13 Representatives program (LVER), the Transition Assistance  
14 Program (TAP), and the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program  
15 (DVOP).

16 (2) The division shall coordinate with the Employment  
17 Development Department for the transfer of the administration of  
18 the programs in paragraph (1) from the Employment Development  
19 Department to the division, including, but not limited to, all of the  
20 following:

21 (A) Transferring to the division employees serving in state civil  
22 service, other than temporary employees, who are engaged in the  
23 performance of the administration of programs in paragraph (1).  
24 The status, positions, and rights of those persons shall not be  
25 affected by their transfer and shall continue to be retained by those  
26 persons pursuant to the State Civil Service Act (Part 2  
27 (commencing with Section 18500) of Division 5 of Title 2 of the  
28 Government Code), except as to positions the duties of which are  
29 vested in a position exempt from civil service. The personnel  
30 records of all transferred employees shall be transferred to the  
31 division.

32 (B) Transferring to the division all records of the Employment  
33 Development Department related to the administration of the  
34 programs described in paragraph (1). The Department of General  
35 Services shall resolve any questions of which records should be  
36 transferred under this subparagraph.

37 (C) Transferring to the division all unexpended balances of  
38 appropriations and other funds available for use for the  
39 administration of the programs described in paragraph (1) for  
40 expenditure for the purpose for which the appropriation was

1 *originally made or the funds were originally available. The*  
2 *Department of Finance shall resolve any questions of where the*  
3 *balances and funds should be transferred.*  
4 *(3) Any costs incurred by the department in implementing the*  
5 *transfer required by this subdivision shall be paid utilizing existing*  
6 *resources of the department.*

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